Unit Cohesion & the Impact on Safety

The Facts

- We don’t see most of the decisions that our Marines make in combat or in garrison.
- Marines make good decisions in combat.
- Evidence shows an increase in poor decision making in garrison.
- Poor decision making leads to safety statistics…and programs.

- Decision making is a function of leadership and the cohesion within a unit.

- Evidence shows that we have leadership and cohesion issues that require institutional attention.

Solutions……

The Evidence

- 17 Death Briefs (CONUS)
  - Small Unit Leadership usually knows about the causative factors or at risk behavior.
  - Reticent to report up the chain of command for fear of the “system”.
  - Lack of 24/7 small unit leader ownership.
  - In general, leadership accountability absent because leadership standard not imposed.
  - LtCol CO’s and SgtMaj’s generally in the dark regarding small unit leader’s involvement. General lack of ownership.
  - Operational Tempo underlying contributor???

The Evidence

- 40 NCO DUIs
  - 4 hour Q+A - **Why?**
  - 50% getting out!
  - No Plan
  - Do it all the time- alcohol problem
  - Poor Judgment
  - “SARP is a joke” I miss appointments and nobody knows!

The Evidence

- Discharges
  - 3 times higher in 09
  - Regimental holding areas?
  - Indicator of other issues
  - 3/9 Lt “I spent 30 days doing nothing but discharge packages!”
  - Timeliness

The Evidence

- DEOX Survey Results
  - Trust
  - Commitment
  - Lower than the DOD/ Joint Standard

!

The Evidence

- Alcohol Screening
  - 4 weeks to screen, 5 weeks to inpatient
  - Missed appointments!
  - Limited command involvement

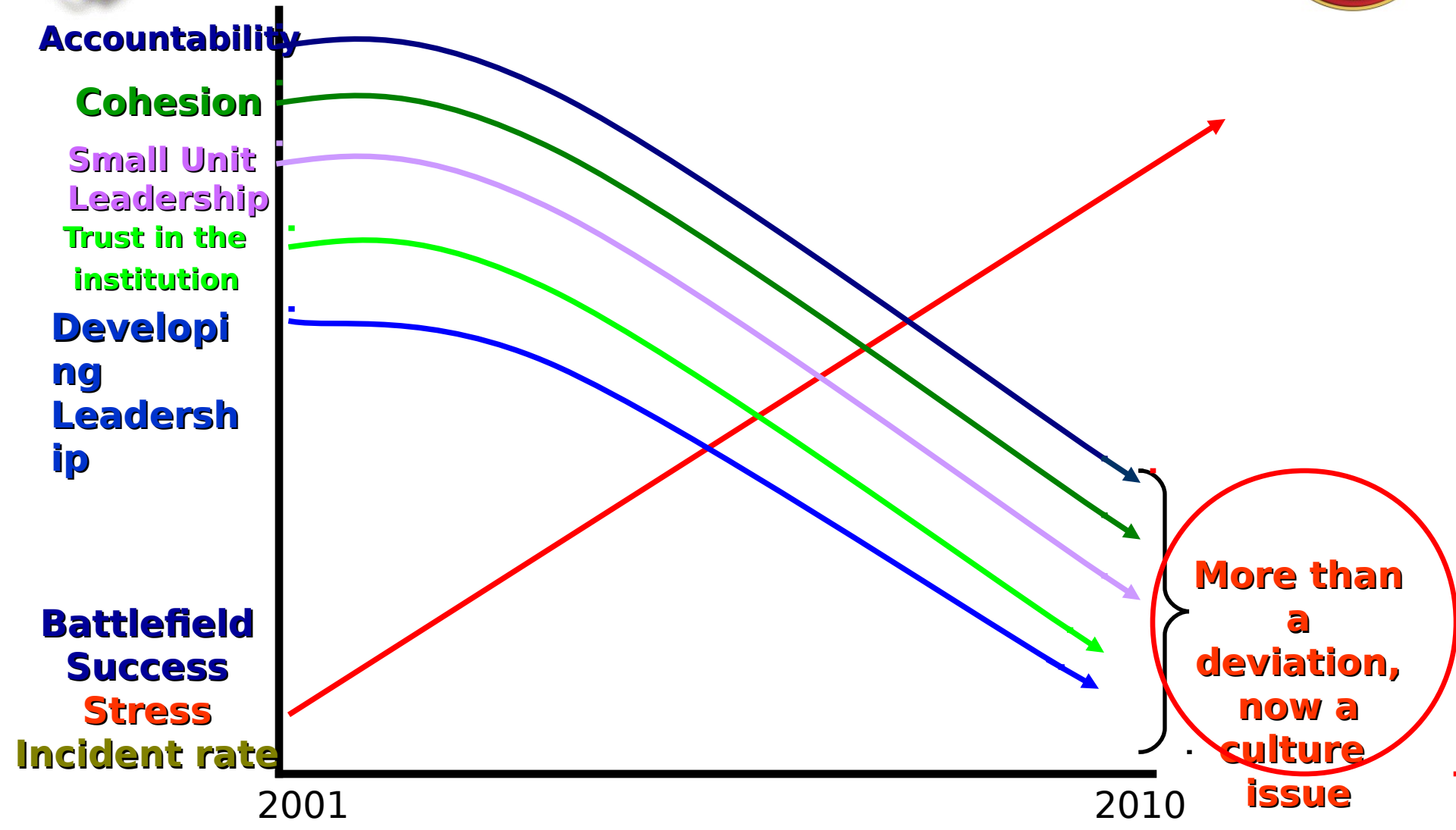
The Evidence

- Smith/ Beaudreau/Miller Report
  - Identified **Cohesion** as major causative factor
  - Russell Leadership
    - Cohesion!
    - Change Agent?

The Evidence

- Lt Survey (40-50)
  - “Non-deployables in the way”
  - Little leadership mentoring from seniors
  - Little after hours involvement or ownership
  - Good weekend= No Incidents!
  - Generally unaware of programs
  - No plaque- Unit Identity
  - Commander’s Concept=100% PTP
  - Peer standard: Combat Legit

Culture Shift



The Moral is to the Physical as 3:1

Solutions

Back to the Future

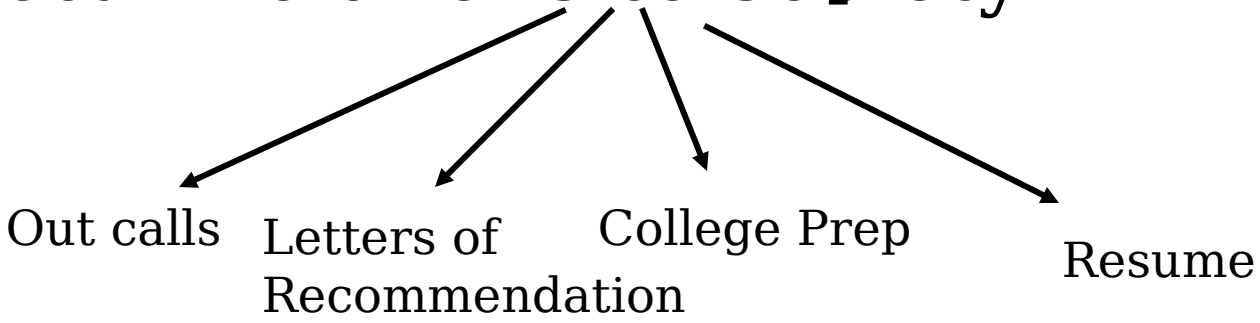
- MCDP-1 Warfighting
- In combat and in garrison - philosophy for action
- Decentralized Decision Making through…
  - Mission Orders & Trust Tactics
  - Trust that senior will provide clear intent and trust that Marine will live within it!
  - Requires supervision at all levels.

Supervision

- “It takes the whole team to work a problem”
- “You can’t outsource problem solving”
- 4th ID
  - At Risk Board (Incident focused)
    - Officer, SNCO, Surgeon, Chaplain
  - Company to Division
    - Monthly Board
    - Care, Causative Factors, Rapid Recovery
  - No suicides in 13 months in Baghdad & in combat
  - 24 MEU Human Factors Board

Hope Card

- Make Marines ✓
- Win Battles ✓
- Return citizens to society ?



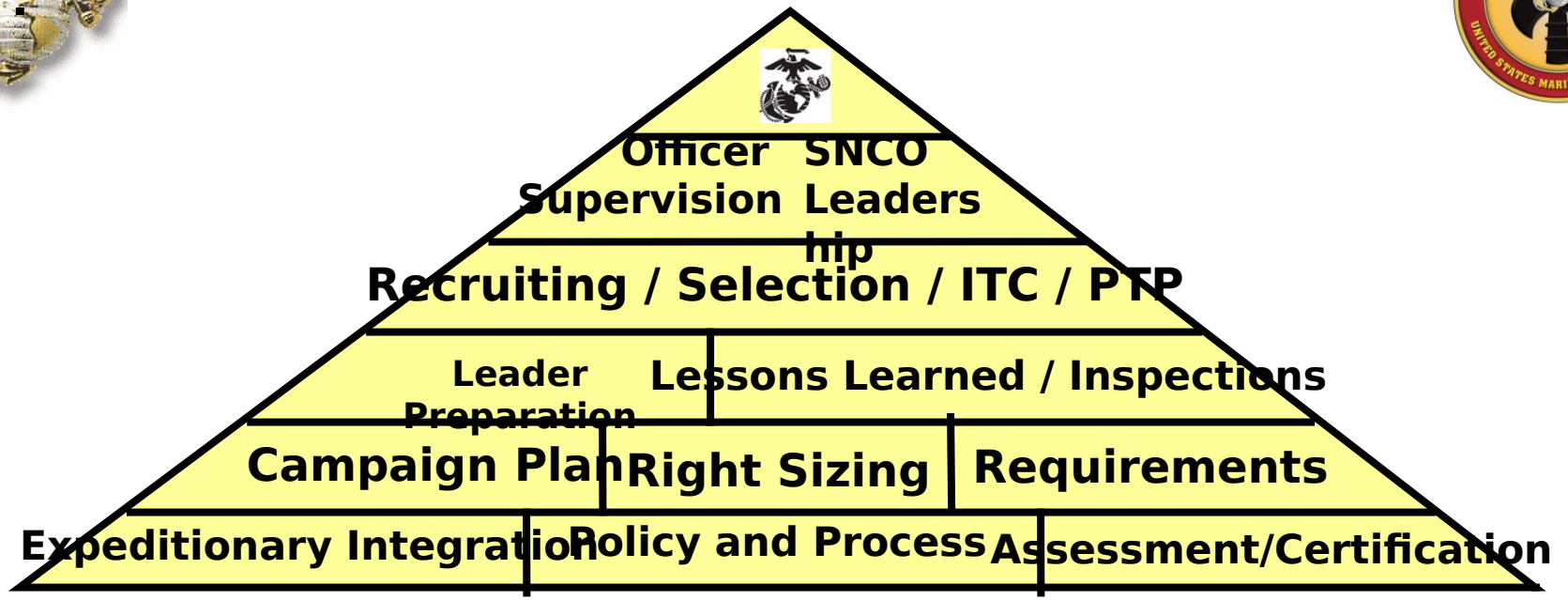
- Very difficult in Transition!

Red Carpet Treatment

Junior SNCO Equation

- MOS expertise: High
- Life skills, problem solving: Low
- Operate at ground zero of the **culture shift**
- Can’t solve this on their own…need institutional support - course correction.
- Need CMC & SMMC “CFT” like emphasis

COMMANDER'S PRIORITIES

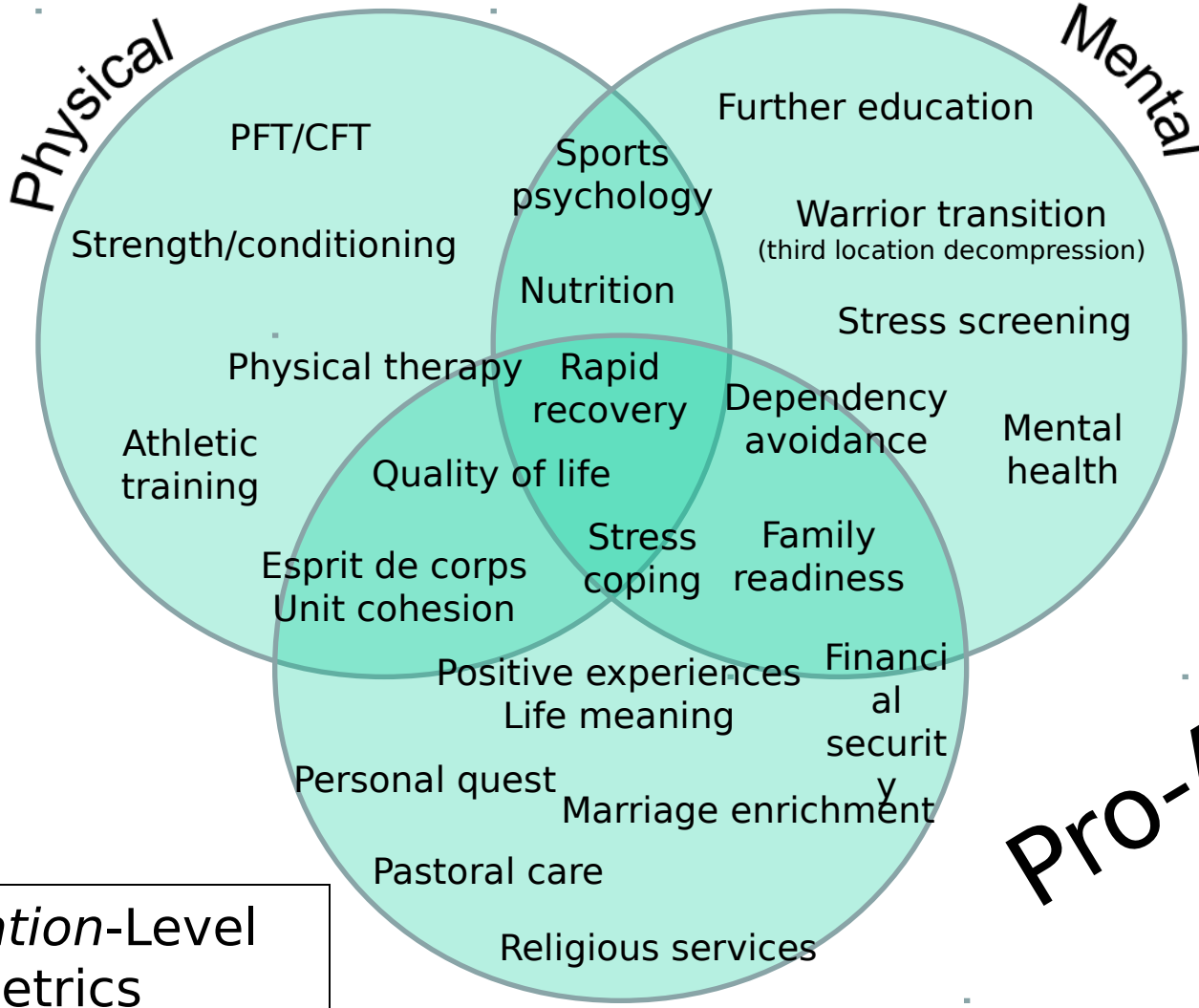


OPERATIONAL

FOUNDATION

SOF Care	Cohesion	Commander's Prep
Admin Readiness	Standards of Conduct	Reintegration
Counseling	Drug/Alcohol	Maintenance/Accountability
PME	SNCO EMPOWERMENT	QOL
Interior Guard	Force Preservation	Family Readiness
Family Advocacy	Medical Care	Military Justice
Network Security	Civilian Integration	Spirit/Fitness
Staff Officer Course	Commander's Message	Behavioral Health

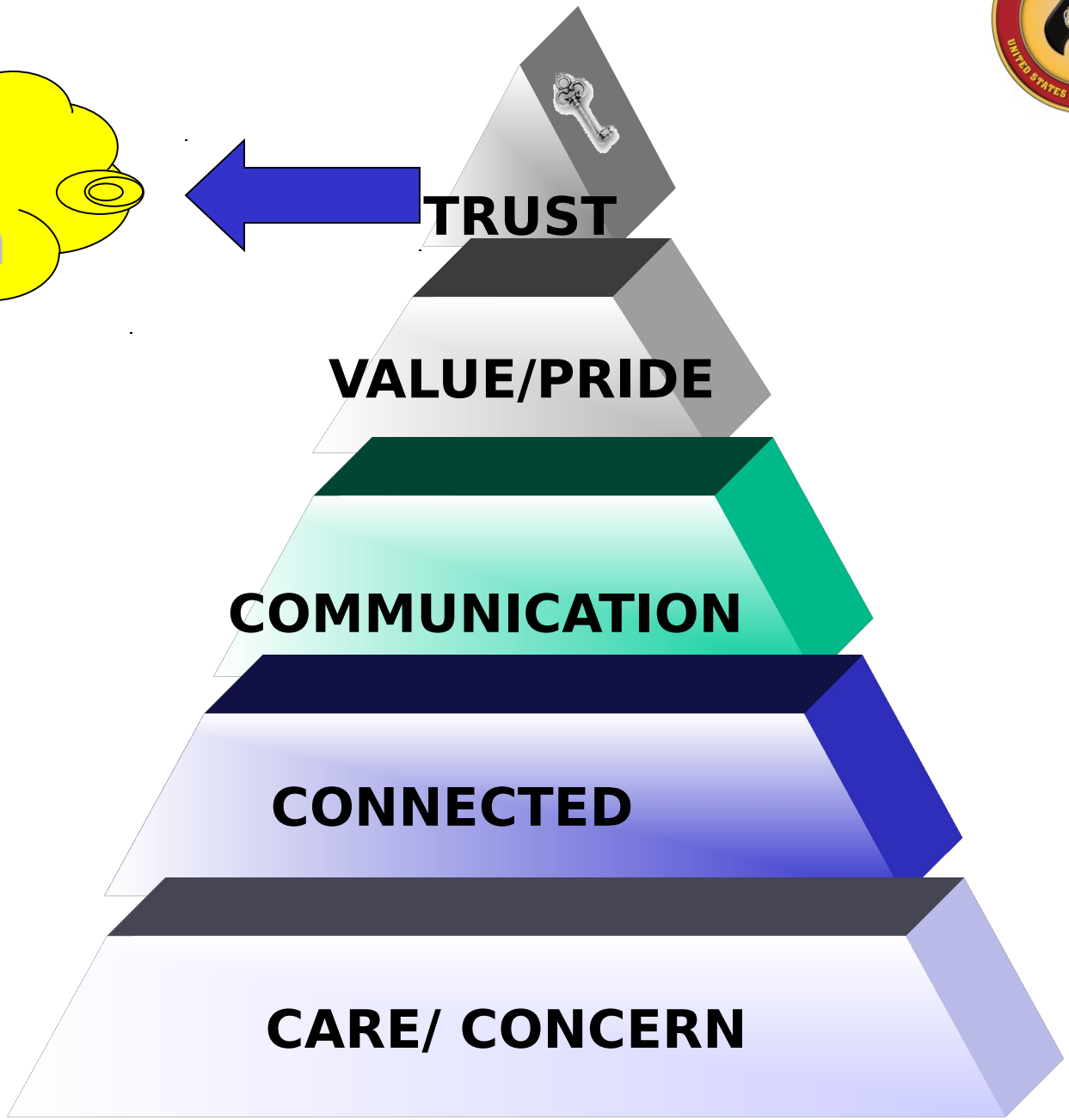
Program Synergy



Pro-Active

Population-Level
metrics
to assess effects

Better Decisions

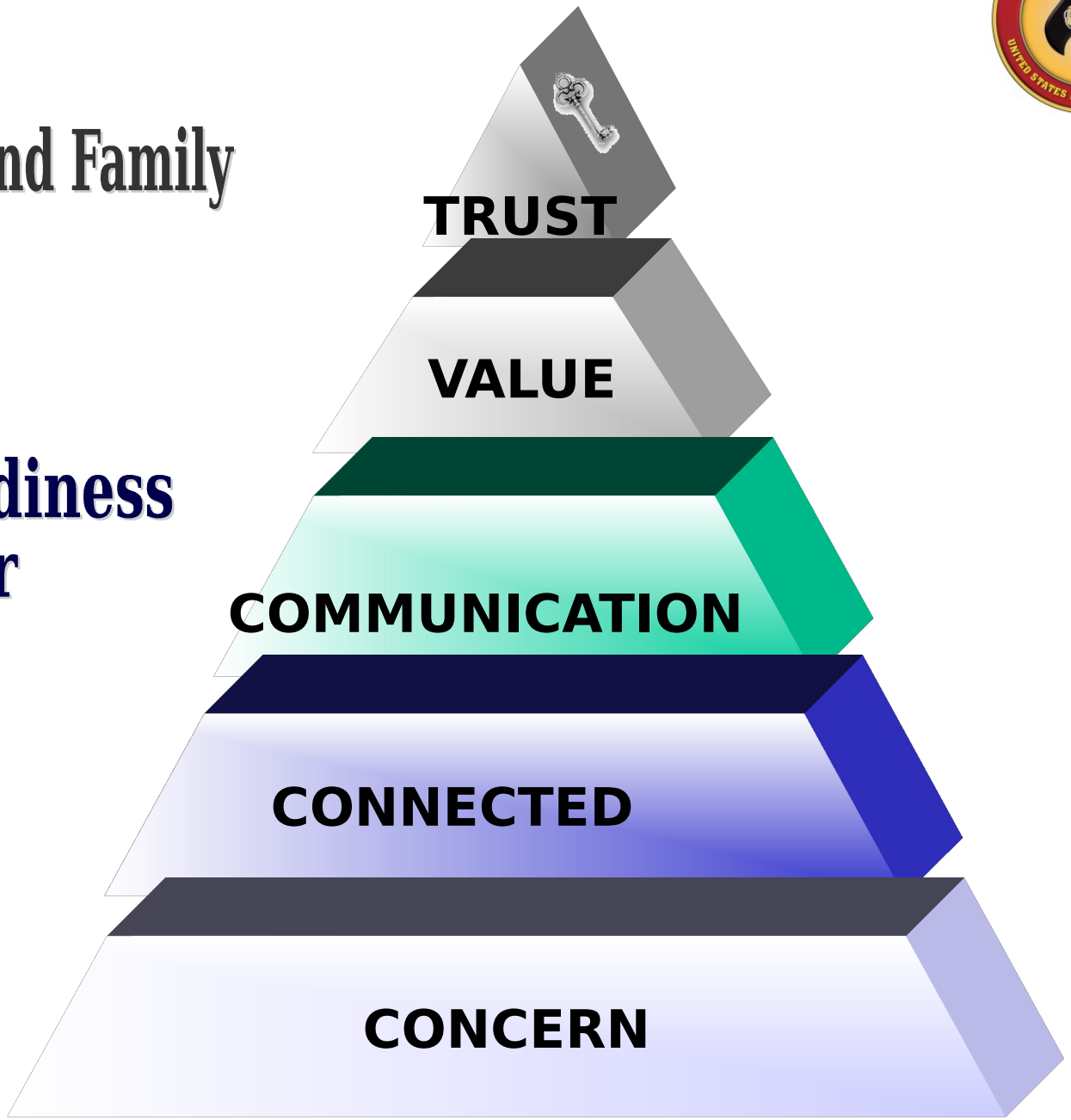


Cohesion

Marine and Family

Family Readiness Officer

Leadership



Conclusions

- Trust is an essential element of cohesion
- SNCO's can't "Fix" this by themselves
- More than Core Values training
- Requires Full Court Press on
  - Teaching, mentoring and coaching
  - Main effort in MCU- right play book (OSCAR)
- Institution must place high value on coaching
- Small Unit Leaders must see what "Right" looks like.
- Recalibrate DEOX to measure cohesion
- Must keep returning lettermen in the leadership equation